



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 14, 2020**

**New Coalition Launches with Urgent Call to Pass Paid Sick Days Bill During COVID-19 Crisis**

**PRESS CONFERENCE: Monday, August 17, at 9:30 am (Zoom)**

RICHMOND - A new coalition advocating paid sick days for Virginia workers will host its inaugural press conference on Monday, Aug. 17, at 9:30 am (Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81796537949> Meeting ID: 817 9653 7949, Passcode: 946700).

***Virginians for Paid Sick Days***, a state-wide coalition of advocacy groups, non-profits, unions, and faith leaders will call on Governor Northam and lawmakers during the Special Session of the General Assembly to pass a bill requiring employers to provide paid sick days to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The legislation, sponsored by Senator Barbara Favola (D, 31<sup>st</sup>) and Delegate Elizabeth Guzman (D, 31<sup>st</sup>), would require all employers to provide 5 paid sick days (40 hours) to full-time workers for regular health matters, annually, and two weeks (80 hours) for COVID-19 quarantine or illness. Senator Favola and Delegate Guzman will speak at the press conference, along with workers, business owners, faith and community leaders. The Virginians for Paid Sick Days coalition will continue to advocate for paid sick leave until all working Virginians no longer have to choose between going to work or going to the doctor when they are sick.

*“This coalition has come together as a powerful force to advocate for this critical legislation,” said Kim Bobo, Executive Director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. “Virginia needs paid sick days to stop the spread of COVID-19, keep Virginians healthy, and enable our economy to safely reopen and stay open.”*

**Paid Sick Day policies are good for business, good for workers, and good for public health.** Offering paid sick days enables businesses to protect their workers and customers, lower their health care costs, and increase their workers’ productivity.

**COALITION PARTNERS:**

ACLU of Virginia

Birth in Color RVA

Care in Action

CASA Virginia

The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis

Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters  
Freedom Virginia  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Norfolk Federation of Teachers  
RISE for Youth  
SEIU Virginia 512  
Virginia AFL-CIO  
Virginia Education Association  
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy  
Virginia Organizing  
Virginia Poverty Law Center  
Voices for Virginia's Children

**FACTS:** [104,838 Virginians](#) have tested positive for COVID-19 and 2,370 people have died. In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, more than [1.2 million Virginia workers](#) (a majority of whom are essential workers) still have no paid sick time. Passing a Paid Sick Day standard will give Virginians paid time off to care for themselves or a family member, get tested for COVID-19, and go to the doctor.

**A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY:** If this bill does not pass, many of the 1.2 million Virginians who have no paid time off will be forced to go to work sick or send their children to school sick, exacerbating the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses, and making it harder for Virginia's economy to get back on track. Parents without paid sick days are more than two times as likely to send their children to school sick. Studies show that [75 percent](#) of childcare workers, and 47 percent of nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides have no paid sick days. These workers handle our food and care for our children, the sick, and the elderly. Without paid sick days, many Virginians are forced to choose between their job and their family's health.

**ECONOMIC & HEALTH BENEFITS:** Especially during the pandemic and tough financial times, a paid sick days policy will save Virginia money and keep our businesses open and safe. Employees who work while sick are [20% less productive](#), and workers who do not have paid sick days are 3 times as likely to go to the emergency room for treatment instead of the doctor's office, increasing healthcare costs. A paid sick day law will help businesses keep costs down while allowing our economy to reopen more quickly and safely. Without paid sick days, businesses risk COVID-19 outbreaks if sick workers show up in health care facilities, restaurants, grocery stores, and in other "essential" jobs. Sick workers cost Virginia businesses money and can cause a catastrophic spread of a potentially deadly disease. It is time for Virginia to pass a Paid Sick Days standard.

[LINK TO FACT SHEET](#)

[VIDEO OF HOME HEALTH WORKER WHO HAS NO PAID SICK DAYS](#)

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** **Roberta Oster**, Communications Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, 804-615-4192, [Roberta@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Roberta@virginiainterfaithcenter.org)

**Amanda Silcox**, Economic Justice Program Manager, Virginia Interfaith Center  
216-375-9570, [amanda@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:amanda@virginiainterfaithcenter.org)